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# **Colorado Commission For Achievement in Education**

**Report to the  
COLORADO  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Colorado Legislative Council  
Research Publication No. 389  
December 1993**

**REPORT OF THE  
COLORADO COMMISSION FOR  
ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUCATION**

**Research Publication No. 389  
December 1993**

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December 20, 1993

To Members of the Fifty-ninth Colorado General Assembly, the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education:

Submitted herewith is the report of the Colorado Commission for Achievement in Education required by Section 22-53-304, C.R.S. The commission was created pursuant to Section 22-53-301, C.R.S. The purpose of the commission is to recommend goals, objectives, and standards for the Colorado program for achievement in education and for Colorado's education and training system to be met by the year 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator Al Meiklejohn, Chair  
Colorado Commission for Achievement  
in Education

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# **COLORADO COMMISSION FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN EDUCATION**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a review of the activities of the Colorado Commission for Achievement in Education (CCAIE) over the first two years of its existence. In its first year, the commission concentrated on gathering data regarding the current status of education in Colorado and studying issues related to improving education in the state. In its second year, the commission provided oversight of actions taken during its first year and continued to gather information regarding the status of education around the state.

*Activities in 1992.* In an effort to gain a sense of the status of education in Colorado, the commission heard testimony from community groups, businesses, parents, and education groups regarding current efforts to improve education in Colorado. The commission also heard briefings regarding 1992 ballot initiatives relating to tax limitations, a sales tax increase to provide additional funds for schools, and vouchers to be used for public or private education.

In reviewing its charges, commission members recognized the difficulty of addressing all of the charges in a one-year period. As a result, in January of 1992, the members prioritized the charges and established task forces to address the charges of primary importance. The members established the following six task forces: 1) Student Standards and Assessment; 2) School Finance and Revenue; 3) Early Childhood Education, Student Readiness, and Parental Responsibility; 4) Linkages and Networking Colleges and Schools; 5) Community, Parental, and Business Involvement in Public Schools; and 6) New Approaches to Management in Public Schools. The Task Force on School Finance and Revenue was dissolved following the 1992 legislative session. During the 1992 interim, the Task Force on School District Capital Construction was created. The task forces submitted reports to the commission in the fall and winter of 1992, summaries of which are provided in Appendix 1.

The task force reports to the commission were the subject of commission hearings in the fall of 1992. In the course of those hearings, the commission agreed that the development of standards and assessments needed to be the first step to comprehensive change in K-12 education, and that the implementation of the recommendations of other task forces would follow. As a result, the work of the Task Force on Student Standards and Assessment became the commission's focal point. The recommendations of the task force were adopted by CCAIE, resulting in House Bill 93-1313.

***Activities in 1993.*** During the 1993 legislative session, the commission concentrated its efforts on the adoption of House Bill 93-1313. Following passage, the commission has monitored the implementation of the bill and will continue that oversight over the coming years. The commission was given additional charges through legislation adopted during the 1993 session, including the development of recommendations regarding higher education increasing enrollments and the development of a K-12 school district budget format, in consultation with the Financial Policies and Procedures (FPP) Committee (an advisory group to the State Board of Education), which is understandable to the general public.

During the 1993 interim, the commission heard from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), and other representatives of the higher education community regarding higher education issues. In addition, the commission met with members of the FPP Committee to develop a budget format understandable to the public.

Commission members also travelled to five locations around the state to hear from citizens regarding their communities' priorities for education. The main themes that emerged from those hearings are discussed further in this report.

***Recommendations.*** Over the first two years of its existence, the commission has made several recommendations which are described in detail in the "Commission Action" section of this report. These recommendations are briefly highlighted below:

***Standards-Based Education.*** The commission recommended the adoption of House Bill 93-1313, which establishes a framework for the development and implementation of a standards-based education system for Colorado's K-12 public schools.

***Capital Construction Needs of School Districts.*** The commission recommended legislation (referred to as Bill 1 later in this document) proposed by the Task Force on School District Capital Construction which would have required the State Board of Land Commissioners to sell up to 50 percent of state school lands over a ten-year period. Money from the sale of these lands would have been credited to the public school fund. Interest earned on these moneys would have been used to provide a different method for equalizing capital reserve funds between districts.

***Early Childhood Education.*** The commission recommended support of a provision in the proposed Public School Finance Act of 1994 which increases the number of children who may participate in the Colorado Preschool Program. The commission also recommended the adoption of a proposed bill (referred to as Bill 2 later in this document) which establishes the Preschool Excellence Grant Program. This program provides grants for the comprehensive implementation of district preschool programs.



*School District Budget Format.* The commission, in consultation with the FPP Committee, recommended the use of an improved budget format, accompanied by an optional, simplified form, for fiscal year (FY) 1994-95 and FY 1995-96. For the long-term, the commission recommended that the FPP Committee continue its efforts to design a statewide school district budget and financial data collection and reporting system. The system will include an on-line electronic reporting system. The commission approved a timeline which requires field testing of the new system by FY 1995-96, completion and implementation of the system by FY 1996-97, and completion of the on-line electronic reporting system by FY 1998-99.

*Proposed Use of Educational Facilities at Lowry Air Force Base.* The commission recommended approval of a joint resolution (referred to as Joint Resolution 1 later in this document) which encourages the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) to pursue ownership and use of the Lowry Air Force Base educational facilities. The facilities would be used by SBCCOE as classrooms and laboratories for postsecondary education in the Denver metropolitan area.

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

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During the fall of 1991, the governor called the Colorado General Assembly into the second special session of the year. In his executive order, among other issues, the governor charged the General Assembly to consider and take appropriate legislative action "concerning public schools, including standards, measures, assessments, and accountability for outcomes in the schools" (Executive Order D0009 91). During that session, the General Assembly debated 17 bills aimed at reforming Colorado's education system. Proposed legislation included merit pay for teachers, eliminating the salary schedule for teachers, allowing teachers to contract individually with multiple districts to offer educational services, controlling administrative costs in the schools, establishing vouchers, and providing for charter schools. However, of all the education bills introduced during that session, only one was signed into law. That bill, House Bill 91S2-1002, created the Colorado Achievement "COACH" Commission, now known as the Colorado Commission for Achievement in Education (CCAIE). The commission held its first meeting on December 10, 1991.

The commission is comprised of 11 voting members, plus the Executive Director of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) and the Commissioner of Education serving as ex officio nonvoting members. The number of voting members and corresponding appointing authorities are:

Senate President	Senate Minority Leader	House Speaker	House Minority Leader	Governor
2	1	2	1	5

The commission membership must have representation from the black and Hispanic communities. Appointments by House and Senate leadership must be members of the House or Senate, respectively. The Governor's appointments must include one teacher and one school administrator. The Governor must also give consideration to school district directors, representatives of the business community, and public school parents when making other appointments. In lieu of one of the Governor's appointments, the Governor may be a member of the commission.

The member first appointed by the President of the Senate, the member first appointed by the Speaker of the House, and the first three members appointed by the

Governor serve two-year terms. The remaining members serve four-year terms. Thereafter, all appointed members serve four-year terms.

### **Commission Charges**

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The general charge to the commission, as set forth in the enabling legislation, states that:

the commission must recommend goals, objectives, and standards for the Colorado program for achievement in education and for a state education and training system to be met by the year 2000 (Section 22-3-302, C.R.S.).

The enabling legislation enumerates several other charges to the commission which are assigned primary or secondary consideration. In addition, the commission has been charged with duties through legislation passed during the 1993 legislative session. Following is a comprehensive list of charges to the commission.

*Charges in the Enabling Legislation (22-53-302, C.R.S.).* The commission must give primary consideration to recommending goals, objectives, and standards for:

- the Colorado program for achievement in public schools relating to the assessment of student achievement in public schools;
- a graduated system of educational achievement standards reflecting basic, superior, and worldwide expectations;
- a system of rewards; imposed policies, procedures, and processes for improvement; and sanctions related to student achievement outcomes;
- early childhood education; and
- K-12 education, including goals, objectives, and standards addressing the dropout rate and the involvement of parents and businesses in educating and training students.

The commission must give secondary consideration to recommending goals, objectives, and standards for:

- education at state-supported postsecondary institutions;
- adult literacy and basic skills education;

- continuing education and work force training for adults; and
- vocational education and training for secondary school students and adults.

In addition, the commission must develop recommendations regarding the following study areas:

- basic reforms in the state's educational system necessary to achieve the goals, objectives, and standards of the Colorado program for achievement in education;
- changes in the organization of education and training providers that are necessary to meet stated goals, objectives, and standards and to achieve a unified state education and training system;
- amendments to the Public School Finance Act of 1988, including, but not limited to, changes in the value of funding components, school district setting categories, instructional funding ratios, and the limitation on additional local property tax revenue;
- reorganization of school districts, including changes to the School District Organization Act of 1965 and any other barriers, statutory or otherwise;
- changes in teacher preparation course requirements and practices pertaining to teacher employment, including an examination of the challenge of teaching to meet student needs in a changing society;
- utilization of and possible modifications to any existing system for educational accountability or educational achievement in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the Colorado program for achievement in education; and
- effects of education-related social and environmental conditions on educational achievement.

### ***Charges in Other Legislation***

*House Bill 93-1320.* Requires the commission, in consultation with the Financial Policies and Procedures Advisory Committee, to annually advise the State Board of Education in the development of the format for school district budget reports.

*Footnote 31A to the FY 1993-94 Appropriations Bill (Senate Bill 93-234).* Directs the commission, in cooperation with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, to make recommendations to the General Assembly which outline goals and objectives for addressing the increased student enrollments projected through the year

2000. The 27 recommendations should include methods for funding higher education in a manner that would provide an incentive for institutions to serve in-state students within current revenue.

### **Response to Reporting Requirement**

Pursuant to Section 22-53-304, C.R.S., the commission is required to submit a written report to the General Assembly, the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education no later than January 1, 1993. Statute requires the report to include the commission's recommended goals, objectives, and standards for the Colorado program for achievement in education relating to the assessment of student achievement in public schools and for Colorado's education and training system. In addition, the report must contain information concerning the goals, objectives, and standards related to other charges to the commission.

Following submission of the report on January 1, 1993, the commission must report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly concerning recommendations for revisions to the goals, objectives, and standards and the time frames for achieving those goals, objectives, and standards. In addition, the commission must continue to make recommendations concerning the Colorado program for achievement in education, the organization of education and training providers, and amendments to the "Public School Finance Act of 1988."

As mentioned, in its first year the commission focused on the development of goals, objectives, and standards for a standards-based education system. Due to the time consuming nature of this work and the initial magnitude of other charges, the commission did not submit a first-year report. As a result, this report provides a two-year (1992 and 1993) review of the commission's activities and recommendations. It is treated as the first report of the commission and will be submitted to the General Assembly, the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. The report provides a summary of the charges to the commission, action taken in response to those charges, work in progress, and a summary of the traveling sessions of the commission. The appendix provides a summary of task force recommendations.

## COMMISSION ACTION

In response to its charges, the commission took specific action in several areas. These actions are summarized below.

### **Standards-Based Education System**

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During the 1992 interim, the CCAE Task Force on Student Standards and Assessments recommended goals, standards, and objectives for a standards-based education system to the commission (see Appendix 1). Those recommendations were adopted by the commission and resulted in House Bill 93-1313. Commission members Senator Al Meiklejohn and Representative Pat Sullivan sponsored the bill. A summary of the legislation as enacted by the General Assembly is provided below.

### ***Definitions***

Following are the definitions of three key terms used in House Bill 93-1313.

**Standards-based education:** A system of instruction focused on student learning of content standards. This system aligns programs of instruction and assessments with the content standards.

**Content standard:** A compilation of specific statements of what a student should know or be able to do relative to a particular academic area. House Bill 93-1313 distinguishes between content standards in the first priority areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, and geography, and in the second priority areas of art, music, physical education, and civics.

**Assessments:** The methods used to collect evidence of what a student knows or is able to do.

### ***Synopsis***

House Bill 93-1313 establishes a framework for the development and implementation of a standards-based education system for Colorado's K-12 public schools. The legislation provides for:

- the development of model state content standards in first and second priority areas;
- the development and implementation of state assessments designed to measure student progress toward meeting the state model content standards;
- the administration of state assessments on a stratified, random sampling basis to students in the fourth, eighth, and tenth grade levels;
- the development and implementation of local school district content standards which meet or exceed the state model content standards in first and second priority areas;
- the development and implementation of district assessments designed to measure student progress toward achieving district content standards;
- the development of an annual report of state and district assessment results; and
- a method for reviewing the effectiveness of standards-based education.

To aid in the establishment of this framework, the legislation creates the **State Standards and Assessments Development and Implementation Council** (the council). The legislation directs the council to: 1) develop and recommend to the State Board of Education state model content standards in first and second priority areas; 2) recommend to the state board and other specified entities a plan for the implementation of standards-based education; 3) develop and recommend to the state board state assessments which are aligned with the state model content standards; and 4) review and recommend to the state board revisions of the state model content standards and state assessments.

The legislation then requires the **State Board of Education** to adopt state model content standards in first and second priority areas and adopt state assessments aligned with the standards. The state board must also adopt timelines specifying the date by which school districts must adopt content standards in the first and second priority areas, adopt implementation plans, and begin assessing students. In addition, the state board is responsible for establishing a resource bank which must include state model content standards and national model standards for district use.

The **Department of Education** has the responsibility of implementing the adopted state assessments on a stratified, random sampling basis to students at the fourth, eighth, and tenth grade level. The department must prepare and submit an annual report of the results of statewide assessments.

In accordance with timelines adopted by the state board, **school districts** must adopt content standards in first and second priority areas and a plan for the development and implementation of assessments. School districts are then required to begin administering assessments.

Finally, the **Colorado Commission for Achievement in Education** must hold an annual public meeting in conjunction with the state board, the council, and the department to discuss the effectiveness of standards-based education and the annual report of assessments prepared by the department.

### ***Overview of the Legislation***

This summary provides a detailed explanation of the components of House Bill 93-1313. Divided into four sections, this summary discusses: 1) the development and implementation of state model content standards and state assessments; 2) the adoption of standards and assessments at the local school district level; 3) other miscellaneous provisions in House Bill 93-1313; and 4) the timeline for the implementation of standards-based education.

### ***Development and Implementation of State Model Content Standards and State Assessment***

***Creation and membership of the council.*** House Bill 93-1313 creates the State Standards and Assessments Development and Implementation Council (the council) to aid in the establishment of a standards-based education system for the state. The council is established within the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and consists of nine members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. Members must be residents of the state and are appointed for three-year terms, although any member may be removed at any time for cause by the Governor. No member may be appointed to serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. The council must include members who are experts in the areas of curriculum, student learning, instruction, assessments, and professional educator development. In addition, council members must represent all areas of the state and the ethnic and cultural diversity and gender balance of the state. At least one member must reside on the Western Slope and at least one member must have expertise in addressing the needs of handicapped students.

***Development of state model content standards.*** The council is required to develop and recommend to the state board state model content standards in the first priority areas of reading, writing, math, science, history, and geography. As a second priority, the council must develop and recommend to the state board model content standards in art, music, physical education, and civics. The council must collaborate



with the Colorado Commission for Achievement in Education (CCAIE) and hold a minimum of six public meetings throughout the state to hear testimony on state model content standards.

The council is directed to use the expertise and recommendations of school district personnel, educators, parents, students, representatives from post secondary education, business persons, members of the general public who represent the cultural diversity of the state, the standards and assessment task force appointed by CCAIE, and the state advisory accountability committee. In addition, in developing the model standards, the council must consider existing national content standards and content standards adopted in other states.

***Development of an implementation plan.*** In recommending state model content standards for adoption by the state board, the council is required to also recommend a plan for the implementation of standards-based education to the state board, CCAIE, the Joint Budget Committee, and the House and Senate Education Committees. The implementation plan must include:

- proposed timelines for school districts to adopt and implement content standards in the first and second priority areas;
- proposed timelines for districts to begin assessing students;
- a summary of the fiscal impact of the implementation of standards-based education at the state and local level including proposed funding amounts and sources; and
- proposed model professional educator development materials and programs and pilot professional educator development programs for use by districts at their discretion.

***Development and implementation of state assessments.*** Following the adoption of state model content standards by the state board, the council must develop and recommend state assessments which are aligned with the model content standards. The council must also recommend an acceptable performance level on each assessment.

Following adoption of state assessments by the state board, the bill directs CDE to administer the assessments at the fourth, eighth, and tenth grade levels on a stratified, random sampling basis. The department is then required to prepare an annual report of the results of the assessments. The report must be made available to the public.

***Continuous review.*** The council must review and recommend revisions of the state model content standards and state assessments to the state board. The performance levels must also be continuously reexamined. Throughout the revision process, the council must continue to consult with community members and members of the state advisory accountability committee.

***State resource bank.*** The law requires the state board to establish a resource bank which must include the adopted state model content standards. The resource bank must also include national model standards, model programs of instruction, model assessments, and model materials for professional educator development collected from districts, national organizations, and from other states for school district use. All items included in the resource bank must specifically address systems and methods for educating children with disabilities.

#### ***Adoption of Standards and Assessments at the Local School District Level***

***Standards.*** In accordance with timelines adopted by the state board, each school district must adopt content standards in the first and second priority areas. Content standards may be adopted for each grade level or for groupings of grade levels. In adopting content standards, each district must seek input from and work in cooperation with educators, parents, students, business persons, community members, and the district advisory accountability committee.

***Assessments.*** Following the adoption of content standards, school districts must establish a plan for the development and implementation of assessments. The plan must include provisions for:

- revising curriculum and programs of instruction to ensure that students will have educational experiences needed to achieve the adopted content standards;
- developing assessments to adequately measure each student's progress toward and achievement of the content standards, including a level of performance which is deemed acceptable;
- administering assessments at grades 4, 8, and 10;
- addressing the different learning styles and needs of students; and
- providing professional educator development in standards-based education.

***Continuous review and dissemination of information.*** Following adoption of the content standards, districts must review and revise the standards as necessary to maintain maximum effectiveness. Districts must work with educators, parents, students, business people, the district advisory accountability committee, and others in revising the standards. In addition, districts must, through written materials and public meetings, inform parents of the effect that content standards and standards-based education will have on students. This information must include how students' progress in achieving standards will be measured and how parents will be informed of such progress.

#### ***Other Provisions***

***Annual public meeting.*** The legislation requires CCAE to hold an annual public meeting, in conjunction with the state board, the council, and the Department of Education to discuss the effectiveness of standards-based education.

***Temporary waiver of regulatory requirements.*** The state board is required to waive regulatory requirements, including achievement testing in the 1993-94 and 1994-95 fiscal years, which are imposed on districts and which the board determines are appropriate to waive in order to facilitate the implementation of standards-based education.

***Withholding of accreditation.*** The legislation requires the state board to withhold a local school district's accreditation if the board determines that the district has not adopted content standards and a plan for implementation as provided by law.

***Directive to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE).*** The legislation directs CCHE, in collaboration with CCAE, the state board, the council, and local school boards, to adopt necessary policies and procedures to ensure that institutions of higher education include the precepts of standards-based education in the curriculum for persons who are being trained to enter the teaching profession.

### *Timeline*

The law specifies the following dates for implementation of the system of standards-based education:

#### ***February 1, 1994***

- The department of education must submit to the education committees of the House and Senate a list of the activities of the department and the regulatory requirements which it recommends be reduced or eliminated to allow for the implementation of standards-based education in the public schools.

#### ***August 1, 1994***

- The council must recommend to the state board state model content standards in first and second priority areas.
- The council must recommend to the state board, CCAE, the Joint Budget Committee, and the House and Senate education committees, a plan for the implementation of standards-based education.

#### ***January 1, 1995***

- The state board of education must adopt state model content standards in first and second priority areas.
- The state board must adopt timelines specifying the date by which school districts must adopt content standards in first and second priority areas, adopt implementation plans, and begin assessing students.

#### ***June 1, 1995***

- The state board must establish the resource bank.

***January 1, 1996***

- The state board of education must adopt state assessments.
- The department of education must administer statewide assessments on a random sampling basis.

***January 1, 1997***

- In accordance with timelines set by the state board of education, but no later than January 1, 1997, each school district must adopt content standards in first priority areas which meet or exceed the state model content standards.
- In accordance with timelines, each school district must also adopt content standards in second priority areas.
- School districts must develop implementation plans.
- The department of education must submit the first annual report regarding the results of statewide assessments.

***January 1, 1998***

- School districts must administer assessments adopted in their district plan in the first priority areas to students in grades 4, 8, and 10.

***January 1, 1999***

- The department's annual report must include assessment results reported by each district as to the percentage of students achieving each of the performance levels specified by the district in its district plan.

**Capital Construction Needs of School Districts**

Following a series of meetings during the 1992 interim, the Task Force on School District Capital Construction presented three legislative proposals to the commission. Three separate bills would have provided for the 1) equalization of school district capital construction revenue; 2) sale of state school lands; and 3) creation of school district capital improvement zones (see Appendix 1).

In light of the adoption of a constitutional tax limitation initiative in 1992 and uncertainties regarding its implications, the commission chose not to endorse the task force recommendations to equalize school district capital construction revenue and create school district capital improvement zones. However, the commission voted to support recommended legislation which provided for the sale of state school lands, described below as Bill 1.

**Bill 1.** Bill 1 would have required the State Board of Land Commissioners to sell up to 50 percent of state school lands over a ten-year period. Money from the sale of these lands would have been credited to the public school fund. Interest earned on these moneys would have been used to provide a different method for equalizing capital reserve funds between districts.

Bill 1 would have repealed the current pupil funding component for the district capital reserve fund. The legislation would have authorized a school district to levy an additional property tax for the district's capital reserve fund to collect a maximum of \$202 per pupil, with the levy limited to two mills. For school districts which collected less than \$202 per pupil, the legislation would have required the state to equalize the amount deposited in the capital reserve fund for each school district at the amount of \$202 per pupil. The state's share of equalization of district capital reserve funds would have been appropriated from the interest earned on the proceeds from the sale of state school lands. The legislation would have required that no less than 50 percent of the interest earned on the proceeds from the sale of school lands be credited to the public school fund for use in covering the state's share of capital reserve fund support.

A variation of this legislation was introduced as House Bill 93-1332, sponsored by task force member Representative Jeanne Adkins. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate Agriculture Committee.

### **Early Childhood Education**

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On November 29, 1993, the commission approved two measures designed to strengthen early childhood education in Colorado. Both measures were recommendations of the Task Force on Early Childhood Education, Student Readiness, and Parental Responsibility. First, the commission supported a provision in the proposed Public School Finance Act of 1994 which increases the number of children who may participate in the Colorado Preschool Program. Second, the commission provided unanimous support of a proposed bill which establishes the Preschool Excellence Grant Program. Representatives Sullivan and Wright, and Senators Meiklejohn and Mares agreed to sponsor the bill. Appendix 1 further details the work of the task force.

**Provision in the Proposed Public School Finance Act of 1994.** The commission unanimously voted to support a provision in the proposed Public School Finance Act of 1994 which increases the number of children who may participate in the Colorado Preschool Program. The number would increase from the current 2,750 to not more than: 1) 4,500 in the 1994-95 budget year; 2) 6,500 in the 1995-96 budget year; and 3) 8,500 in the 1996-97 budget year and budget years thereafter. The provision was adopted by the Interim Committee on School Finance and has been incorporated into the proposed school finance act.

**Bill 2.** The bill establishes the Preschool Excellence Grant Program which provides funding for programs necessary for the comprehensive implementation of district preschool programs. Grants would be available for implementation of:

- any of the plans required by the Colorado Preschool Program, including: plans for coordinating the preschool program with extended day services; plans for coordinating the program with family support services; and plans for coordinating the program with programs which provide parent education and training;
- programs providing preschool services to children under the age of four; and
- any other programs specified by the State Board of Education, implementation of which will result in enhancing the excellence of the district preschool program.

Beginning July 1, 1994, any school district with an operating district preschool program may apply to the State Board of Education for participation in the Preschool Excellence Grant Program. An application for participation must include: 1) an explanation of the program and a method for measuring the effectiveness of the program; 2) a plan for collaboration between the district advisory council, the school district, governmental agencies, and private providers of child care services or family intervention services; and 3) a budget for the implementation of the program. The state board is responsible for reviewing the applications and selecting those programs to receive funding.

Each school district which participates in the Preschool Excellence Grant Program is required to submit a semiannual report to the state board on the effectiveness of the funded program. On and after January 1, 1996, the state board must submit an annual report to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the Preschool Excellence Grant Program, including a compilation of the participating school district reports.

The bill provides a \$200,000 appropriation for the grant program for FY 1994-95 to be credited to the Preschool Excellence Fund. Any public or private grants or donations received by the state board for the Preschool Excellence Grant Program and any additional moneys appropriated by the General Assembly are credited to the fund. Any interest earned on the moneys in the fund remains in the fund and is not credited to the state General Fund. The moneys in the fund are subject to annual appropriation by the General Assembly to the state board for the purpose of implementing the grant program. Moneys in the fund at the end of each fiscal year remain in the fund and are available for distribution by the state board in the following fiscal year.

### **School District Budget Format**

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House Bill 93-1320 requires the commission, in consultation with the Financial Policies and Procedures Advisory (FPP) Committee (an advisory group to the State Board of Education), to annually advise the state board on the development of a school district budget format which is understandable to the general public. On December 14, 1993, the commission approved two measures designed to improve and simplify the school district budget format. Both of these measures were recommendations of the FPP committee and are described below.

***Statewide School District Budget and Financial Data Collection and Reporting System.*** The commission unanimously voted to support the FPP committee in its efforts to design a statewide school district budget and financial data collection and reporting system. The system will be based on a redesigned standard chart of accounts, a standard student information system, and a standard personnel classification system. The system will include an on-line electronic reporting system. All public schools in the state and the Department of Education will use the system to report and obtain necessary financial information.

The commission approved a timeline for the FPP committee which requires field testing of the new system by fiscal year (FY) 1995-96, completion and implementation of the system by FY 1996-97, and completion of the on-line electronic reporting system by FY 1998-99.

***Budget Format for FY 1994-95 and FY 1995-96.*** In recognition of the need for an improved budget for the short term, the commission provided unanimous support for the FPP committee's proposed short-term budget format. This format responds to the requirements of House Bill 93-1320 to the extent possible without changing existing school district accounting systems. The format contains:

- a one-page summary of revenues and expenditures for operating and other funds;



- a presentation of revenues by source and expenditures by type for school district operating funds, a total for all operating funds, and a total for budgeted revenues and expenditures per pupil;
- a presentation of revenues by source and expenditures by type for construction, debt payment, and trust funds; and
- three proposed assurance statements designed to comply with section 22-44-105 (2), C.R.S., which requires: 1) an explanatory schedule or statement to judge the validity of anticipated revenues and proposed expenditures; 2) a statement which summarizes aggregate revenues, appropriations, assets, and liabilities of each fund in balanced relations; and 3) a disclosure of planned compliance with Section 20 of Article X of the State Constitution.

The commission approved the use of this form for only FY 1994-95 and FY 1995-96, recognizing that the form does not fully meet the requirements of House Bill 93-1320. Included in this motion, the commission provided support for an optional form to accompany the required budget format. This optional form will provide a simplified, concise method for displaying the information contained in the required form. The commission envisioned that this optional form will provide the public with a simple, informative overview of how and where a school district is spending its money.

#### **Proposed Use of Educational Facilities at Lowry Air Force Base**

On September 27, 1993, the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) presented a plan to the commission regarding the use of the educational facilities in the northeast quadrant of Lowry Air Force Base. The proposal entails using the existing educational facilities at Lowry, which comprise approximately 160 acres, as classrooms and laboratories for postsecondary education in the Denver metropolitan area. The commission voted unanimously to support a joint resolution regarding the proposal.

***Joint Resolution 1.*** Joint Resolution 1 encourages SBCCOE to pursue ownership and use of the Lowry education facilities as a means to enhance educational opportunities for students in the Denver metropolitan area.

## **WORK IN PROGRESS**

### **Higher Education**

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Footnote 31A to the FY 1993-94 Appropriations Bill (Senate Bill 93-234) directs the commission, in cooperation with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), to make recommendations to the General Assembly which outline goals and objectives for addressing the increased student enrollments projected through the year 2000. The recommendations should include methods for funding higher education in a manner that would provide an incentive for institutions to serve in-state students within current revenue.

During the 1993 interim, the commission began its efforts to respond to Footnote 31A. The commission listened to several presentations from CCHE regarding enrollment projections through the year 2000. CCHE projected that, because of an increase in the college-age population, the public and private sectors of postsecondary education will need to enroll and serve at least an additional 22 percent of students over the next decade just to maintain today's participation rate. An additional 10 percent increase in enrollment will be needed if Colorado responds to projected workforce demands. Finally, the demand for lifelong learning and continuing education will likely increase. Therefore, CCHE projected that the demands that will be made on the state's colleges and universities are likely to increase by 35 to 50 percent over the next decade. CCHE indicated that the state's current higher education system cannot accommodate these projected growths without additional space and policy changes.

The commission discussed with policy experts from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) the various options available to meet the needs associated with the projected increasing enrollments. The commission discussed such options as: 1) capping student enrollment; 2) uncoupling the funding formula for higher education from student enrollment; 3) providing incentives for students to complete their higher education programs in less time; 4) linking the business community to higher education to help provide training; 5) decreasing the redundancy of the last year of high school and first year of college; and 6) tapping the resources of the private sector to provide educational opportunities to students. The commission plans to continue its discussions in 1994.

## **School District Budget Format**

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Pursuant to House Bill 93-1320, the commission is required to work annually with the Financial Policies and Procedures Advisory Committee (FPP committee) in advising the State Board of Education on the development of a school district budget format. The commission plans to work closely with the FPP committee as the committee begins its efforts to design a statewide school district budget and financial data collection and reporting system. The commission places high priority on addressing needed policy changes and assuring compliance with established timelines to ensure the timely development of an understandable school district budget format.

## SUMMARY OF 1993 TRAVELING SESSIONS

In November of 1993, the commission visited Sterling, Greeley, Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. In each of these communities, the commission listened to community members, parents, teachers, students, administrators, and business representatives share their priorities for education. Several common, in addition to regional, themes emerged from these meetings.

The most common theme addressed by members of each community was the implementation of House Bill 93-1313, concerning standards and assessments. Issues pertaining to early childhood education and collaboration were next common, followed by concerns regarding licensure of teachers, parental involvement, and the limited ability of postsecondary institutions to accommodate increasing enrollment demands.

*Standards and Assessments.* Members from each of the communities visited by the commission voiced concerns regarding the implementation of House Bill 93-1313, standards and assessments. Educators at each public meeting asked the commission to allow schools time to implement the new standards and assessments. They emphasized that schools need time to properly establish standards and effectively develop assessments based on those standards. In addition to time, several educators asked the commission to recommend that additional funds be allocated to school districts for the development of assessments. Some suggested that districts then be held accountable for the use of those funds.

Several meeting participants indicated that improved school staff development and training programs were necessary in order to effectively implement standards and assessments. These participants emphasized that school staff, especially teachers, must understand and feel included in the standards and assessments process. A few participants suggested lengthening the school year to provide extra days for teacher training and development programs.

Several parents and teachers expressed concern regarding those students who do not succeed within the standards model. They asked where such students should go to obtain remedial support. They also inquired as to what to do with the students who, in spite of remedial support, cannot meet the standards.

In addition to providing a forum for the expression of concerns surrounding House Bill 93-1313, the meetings provided an opportunity for clarification of the intent of the standards and assessments legislation. The commission emphasized in each community that standards-based education should not be categorized as outcome-based education.

***Early Childhood Education.*** Parents, community members, teachers, and administrators in each of the communities emphasized the importance of early childhood education programs. They testified that effective early childhood education programs are necessary to ensure that every student comes to school ready to learn. They indicated that successful early childhood education programs can help prepare students to meet K-12 standards.

***Collaboration.*** At each public meeting, the commission listened to business representatives, parents, and postsecondary institutions discuss their collaborative efforts with local schools. The most commonly discussed collaborative efforts were between schools and postsecondary institutions. Such collaborations ranged from sharing physical facilities to sponsoring pre-collegiate programs for minority students to establishing coordinated high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment standards. Many of the people involved in these collaborative efforts emphasized the need for incentives to encourage and reward schools and postsecondary institutions for their efforts.

Additional meeting participants involved in school and postsecondary collaborative efforts indicated the need for legislation to provide schools and postsecondary institutions with greater management flexibility. These meeting participants suggested removing barriers which prevent or hinder the ability of schools and postsecondary institutions to "contract out" for services. They also stated that K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions should consider standardized employment and other management practices to facilitate sharing of resources.

***Educator Licensure.*** Meeting participants expressed concern regarding the establishment of induction programs under the new licensure law. School superintendents and teachers were also concerned about additional time required to develop staff evaluation practices that address requirements in the law.

***Parental Involvement.*** Several parents participating in the public meetings indicated a need to strengthen parent involvement in schools. These parents outlined various ways in which parents can meet specific school needs by volunteering in the classroom, providing after-school support, and attending school activities designed for parents.

***Limited Ability of Postsecondary Education Institutions to Accommodate Increasing Enrollments.*** Meeting participants representing a variety of public postsecondary education institutions provided examples of the limited abilities of their institutions to accommodate increasing enrollments. Commission members discussed this issue in light of the constraints of the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and Great Outdoors Colorado constitutional amendments, emphasizing the need to look beyond traditional sources of funding. Representatives of private postsecondary institutions expressed a

willingness to cooperate with public institutions through public/private contracts to help absorb some of the increasing enrollments.

***Distance Learning — Sterling.*** In Sterling, the commission listened to several meeting participants discuss distance learning. Through telecommunications, many rural schools are collaborating with postsecondary institutions to receive instruction in courses not offered at the school site. Participants in these distance learning projects indicated a need for legislation to remove barriers associated with telecommunications service providers. For example, in connecting a rural school to a postsecondary institution via telecommunications, several carriers may be involved. Often these carriers charge varying connection rates which can become quite costly. A few participants suggested that legislation providing monetary incentives for distance learning projects could help remove some of the costs to schools and postsecondary institutions, thereby encouraging more schools to engage in these collaborative projects.

***Graduate Programs — Grand Junction.*** In Grand Junction, the commission listened to community members express their concern regarding the lack of quality graduate programs on the Western Slope. Currently a number of Front Range postsecondary institutions provide satellite graduate programs in Grand Junction. Participants indicated these satellite programs are not sufficient to meet graduate program needs on the Western Slope. Members of a community task force on graduate education on the Western Slope presented preliminary results of a study of the issue.

# APPENDIX 1

## TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

In the fall and winter of 1992, the CCAE task forces submitted reports to the commission. Following is a summary of the recommendations of each task force.

### Task Force on Student Standards and Assessment

**Charges.** The commission appointed the Task Force on Student Standards and Assessment to make recommendations regarding a statewide student assessment program. The commission specified that the recommendations include:

- a set of statewide standards for achievement in math, science, reading, English, and other areas as determined by the task force;
- tools for assessing progress toward the statewide standards;
- a method for reporting both measures of achievement and progress toward the statewide standards to the Colorado Department of Education in a manner that allows comparison between districts throughout the state; and
- a system of rewards; imposed policies, procedures, and processes for improvement; and sanctions related to progress toward the statewide student achievement standards to be administered by the Colorado Department of Education.

**Goal Statement.** In response to its charges, the task force developed the following goal statement:

The task force, through a collaborative effort, will prepare a plan for standards-based education in K-12 Colorado schools. This plan will focus on a shared vision, shared responsibility and a cooperative spirit among policy makers, educators, parents, students, business persons, and the community. The Colorado state government and state associations will serve as catalysts and partners for improving achievement of all students throughout the state.

**Recommendations.** The task force recommended that the commission sponsor legislation to implement a standards-based education system in the state. The task force further recommended that the legislation contain provisions for:

- the development of outcome standards, defined as broad, interdisciplinary statements of what a student should be able to do;
- the development of content standards, defined as specific subject matter a student should know or be able to use;
- the development of assessments and performance demonstrations, defined as tests, tasks, or tools that are used to assess what a student knows or is able to do;
- the establishment of levels of performance or measures of success at achieving standards including levels of advanced, proficient, basic, and in-progress;
- the development of model standards, assessments, and curriculum frameworks at the state level;
- the establishment of a resource bank containing curriculum frameworks and assessments from local, state and national sources;
- the establishment of requirements that local school districts develop standards as rigorous as those at the state level;
- a timeline for implementation of the standards-based system;
- the issuance of diplomas certifying competence;
- a plan for staff development in the area of standards-based education; and
- appropriate evaluation and reporting of assessment results.

Following the presentation of these recommendations, the task force worked with the commission to develop House Bill 93-1313.

#### **Task Force on Early Childhood Education, Student Readiness, and Parental Responsibility**

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*Initial Charges.* The commission appointed the Task Force on Early Childhood Education, Student Readiness, and Parental Responsibility to develop recommendations for the improvement of the public and private system of early childhood education and the provision of parent education opportunities. The commission specified that the task force's recommendations include:



- possibilities for integration and consolidation of public and private early childhood education programs and services;
- a study of access to and the quality of preschool projects, Head Start, prenatal care, nutrition programs, and immunization programs;
- an analysis of education programs available to parents with young children;
- a cost-benefit analysis of current and proposed programs dealing with early childhood education, student readiness, and parental responsibility; and
- an evaluation of the quality of preschool education.

***Initial Recommendations of the Task Force.*** The task force responded to each component of the charge by developing a report. The report contained two sections. The first section provided: 1) an overview of Colorado's families and children; 2) research findings on the effectiveness of early childhood education; and 3) a review of effective programs and strategies in Colorado. The second section of the report outlined the recommendations and goals of the task force. The recommendations were as follows:

- The legislature should continue to support and expand model programs like the Colorado Preschool Project.
- The goals and objectives developed by the task force should be implemented in a timely manner.
- The task force should continue to provide information and support in the implementation of its recommendations.
- The legislature should support the work of the State Efforts Management Group to reorganize existing departments and services to make them more responsive to the needs of children and families. The State Efforts Management Group was established to create linkages between the departments of Health, Social Services, Institutions, Education, the Governor's Office, and the Governor's Job Training Office.
- The legislature should use the goals identified by Colorado 2000 as guides for policy decision-making. Colorado 2000 is a statewide effort to improve our schools. It is coordinated by the Governor in response to the National Goals 2000.

- The legislature should continue to recognize that funds spent in prevention and early intervention result in savings to the state.

From these recommendations and based on each component of its charge, the task force developed specific goals. These goals are highlighted below.

- Goal 1: Every community seeking state funding for the coordination of early childhood education programs should establish a local council with broad based involvement for the purpose of collaborating on the development and delivery of services to families and young children.
- Goal 2: Comprehensive information and resource and referral services should be available to every community to inform parents and care-givers of the support available to them.
- Goal 3: Comprehensive programs offering education, information, support, and advocacy should be available to all parents.
- Goal 4: Adequate data should be available to assess the cost-benefit of preschool education.
- Goal 5: All early childhood care and education programs should be high quality and developmentally appropriate.
- Goal 6: The state should create a career development system for early childhood professionals.

For a review of the objectives and standards associated with each goal, see the task force's final report on file with Legislative Council staff (LCS).

***Revision of Charges.*** In July, 1993, the commission asked the task force to identify the steps needed to improve early childhood education in the state. Members of the task force reviewed their report for the commission, highlighting the goal statements. The commission asked the task force to revise its charge and develop more specific recommendations for action.

The task force presented its revised charges to the commission on September 27, 1993. The charges directed the task force to: 1) recommend immediate legislative and policy initiatives in the areas of early childhood education, student readiness, and parental responsibility; and 2) recommend an on-going plan to assist the

commission in assessing the quality, adequacy, and effectiveness of early childhood care and education programs. The commission approved the revised charges.

**Recommendations.** The task force met during the months of October and November of 1993 to develop specific recommendations for review by the commission. On November 29, 1993, the task force presented its recommended legislation and policy initiatives to the commission.

First, the task force recommended that the commission support a provision in the proposed Public School Finance Act of 1994 which increases the number of children who may participate in the Colorado Preschool Program. This provision was approved by the Interim Committee on School Finance and has been incorporated into the proposed school finance act.

Second, the task force recommended that the commission support a proposed bill which establishes the Preschool Excellence Grant Program. The bill provides funding for programs necessary for the comprehensive implementation of district preschool programs. Grants are available for implementation of: 1) any of the plans required by the Colorado Preschool Program; 2) programs providing preschool services to children under the age of four; and 3) any other programs specified by the State Board of Education, implementation of which will result in enhancing the excellence of the district preschool program. Beginning July 1, 1994, any school district with an operating district preschool program may apply to the State Board of Education for participation in the Preschool Excellence Grant Program.

#### **Task Force on Linkages and Networking Colleges and Schools — LINCS**

**Charge.** The commission requested that the Task Force on Linkages and Networking Colleges and Schools (LINCS), an existing task force of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), become a task force of the commission. LINCS agreed to this request and to the commission's charge to recommend methods to improve communication and coordination between: 1) the K-12 and higher education systems; and 2) CCHE and the CDE in relation to the implementation of House Bill 91-1009, "The Educator Licensing Act of 1991."

**Recommendations.** In response to the commission's charge, the task force developed a multi-year action plan. The action plan delineates specific goals, objectives, and standards. All activities described in the action plan are within existing resources unless otherwise noted. None of these activities require new legislation, however, many require changes in current regulations, policies, and practices. Following is a summary of the goals and objectives of the task force's action plan.

*Goal Statement 1: Educator preparation should be rigorously and continuously improved.*

Objective A: Pre-service and in-service educator preparation programs should provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the necessary skills and competencies to meet the needs of all students.

Objective B: Communication between the professional standards boards, CCHE, and CCAE should be facilitated as the licensure system is designed.

*Goal Statement 2: Communication and coordination between K-12 and higher education should be improved.*

Objective A: CDE and CCHE should develop a common set of goals.

Objective B: Colorado students, parents, and school districts should receive timely information about higher education options, requirements, and preparation standards.

Objective C: LINCS should play a significant role in ensuring that Colorado public high school graduates who choose to pursue postsecondary education will have adequate academic preparation to succeed. LINCS' efforts should focus on enhancing the availability and appropriateness of the information needed.

Objective D: LINCS should promote partnerships between colleges and school districts.

In order to implement the goals and objectives of the action plan, the task force has established standards and evaluation mechanisms. These more detailed components of the task force's plan are on file with LCS.

## **Task Force on Community, Parental, and Business Involvement in Public Schools**

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**Charges.** The commission appointed the Task Force on Community, Parental, and Business Involvement in Public Education to develop recommendations regarding existing and new programs that might be implemented on a statewide basis to involve parents, business persons, and other community members in public schools. The commission also charged the task force with identifying a group of business people interested in meeting with the commission to explore additional types of involvement.

**Recommendations.** In response to its charges, the task force developed the four goals and accompanying objectives summarized below.

*Goal I: The effectiveness of school accountability committees should be increased to empower every committee member as a full participant in the accountability process.*

Objective 1: New rules and regulations should be adopted which augment the representation, the member selection process, operating guidelines, and communications of school accountability committees.

Objective 2: Legislation should be adopted to enable school accountability committees to share in decisions regarding implementation of student standards and assessments and to provide an advisory role in the development of a process for the selection, evaluation, and retention of school personnel.

Objective 3: Legislation should be adopted to establish an office of educational accountability to provide support for district and school accountability committees. (Note: the task force requested more time to refine this objective).

*Goal II: District accountability committees should be responsible for assisting the local board of education, in a collaborative process, in the adoption of local district student standards and assessments and in the establishment of diplomas certifying competence.*

Objective 1: Regulations should be adopted to provide district accountability committees with responsibility for

coordinating community agencies and their services to families.

Objective 2: Legislation should be adopted to provide that the district committee advise the local board of education in the development of student standards and assessments.

*Goal III: Efforts should be made to improve community, parental, and business involvement in public education, and to establish education as a community priority.*

Objective 1: A community foundation should be established within the Colorado Department of Education to enable districts and schools to access resources to improve community involvement in their schools.

Objective 1A: A data base of business, community, and education partnerships should be coordinated and expanded to provide a resource for districts and schools.

Objective 2: Business, professional, and service organizations should join together under the leadership of CCAE to become the focal point for advocating and developing mechanisms for business involvement in education.

Objective 3: A parent involvement summit should be convened annually in Colorado with parent, education, child advocacy, and business groups cooperatively developing policy and goal statements to strengthen their commitment to action in education.

Objective 4: "Help Wanted: Crisis in the Work Force," an intensive communications program, should be sponsored to close the gap between the way business and education leaders and the general public view education issues in Colorado.

*Goal IV: The involvement of business people as teachers in public education should be increased. (Note: the task force requested time to further study and develop objectives for this goal.)*

## **Task Force on New Approaches to Management in Public Schools**

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**Charge.** The commission appointed the Task Force on New Approaches to Management in Public Schools to study and make recommendations regarding possible changes to the organizational and management structures in Colorado's schools and school districts.

**Recommendation.** In response to this charge, the task force developed a single, broad recommendation with 13 supporting objectives. The recommendation and objectives are stated below.

*Overall recommendation: The state education system should be changed from a time-based to a standards-based system.*

- Objective I: Specific time requirements such as 1,080 student contact hours should be replaced with compulsory achievement of standards.
- Objective II: Schools should be open year-round.
- Objective III: The legislature should require all Colorado public institutions of higher education to develop and implement alternative methods of student admissions.
- Objective IV: Most, if not all, of the education code should be rewritten to reflect a standards-based education system.
- Objective V: A complete review of current organizational structures should be conducted to help schools change to a standard-based education model. The review should include the role and function of state and local leadership including the General Assembly, Governor's Office, State Board of Education, Department of Education, local school boards, district and building administrators, teachers, and parents.
- Objective VI: The Commissioner of Education should be responsible for developing support systems to assist local schools and districts in implementing continuous improvement management processes designed to support all students in reaching high standards. The commissioner should involve education groups, business groups, other political and governmental entities, and persons with management expertise in a coalition to provide this support.

- Objective VII: Teacher compensation should reflect excellent or innovative performance as well as educational attainment, longevity, and differentiated responsibilities. The legislature should provide incentives for school boards and employee groups to encourage subcontracting within the system and the development of alternative compensation plans.
- Objective VIII: A student should be allowed the choice to attend any Colorado school on a space available basis, without the school district charging tuition.
- Objective IX: School districts should voluntarily provide full-day kindergarten, before- and after-school care, and day care in all public schools in Colorado.
- Objective X: Public retirement systems should be more transferable and flexible.
- Objective XI: A state technology board should be created to coordinate a comprehensive statewide approach to technology at all levels with all agencies.
- Objective XII: The Commissioner of Education should have authority to assume powers and duties of the local school boards of districts that have lost their state accreditation.
- Objective XIII: The legislature should establish charter schools which are: 1) accessible to all students desiring attendance; 2) limited to public schools; 3) representative in student attendance of the cultural diversity of the area; 4) judged by the same criteria as existing public schools; 5) subject to existing standards for accreditation; and 6) concerned for the rights of participating students, parents, and professional staff.

**Conclusion.** The task force concluded that the state's role should be: 1) to provide a clear set of continuous, improved student outcome standards for graduation using authentic demonstration assessments, incentives, technical assistance, pooling of talents, leadership, and adequate resources to facilitate delivery of instruction; and 2) to remove barriers to high achievement. The task force indicated that the state's role should not be to mandate specific management approaches to reach specific outcomes. Rather, the task force recommended that the local district's role should be to adopt management approaches conducive to maximizing flexibility and effectiveness for



teachers and students and to translate standards into local curriculum and programs. Emphasis at the local level should be on achieving student performance outcomes in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

### **Task Force on School District Capital Construction**

***Charges.*** The commission appointed the Task Force on School District Capital Construction to study and make recommendations regarding the financing of school district capital facilities in the state. The commission also charged the task force with studying the relationship between available financing mechanisms, the Public School Finance Act of 1988, and other relevant statutory provisions.

***Recommendations.*** In response to its charges, the task force made three legislative recommendations in addition to two other conceptual recommendations. The legislative and other recommendations are summarized below.

***Equalization of Capital Construction Revenue.*** The task force proposed legislation which provides four methods for equalizing capital construction revenue between districts. First, the legislation requires the board of education of a school district to make an additional property tax levy, limited to two mills, for the capital reserve fund which, when collected, would equal the capital reserve support level multiplied by the funded pupil count of the district. Second, the legislation authorizes the local board of education to make an additional property tax levy for the purpose of paying costs incurred by the district in testing and removing asbestos and hazardous materials and in complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Third, the legislation designates specific school district bonded indebtedness projects which under specified conditions are eligible to obtain state support from the state bond redemption fund. Finally, the legislation creates the critical capital needs fund consisting of moneys appropriated by the General Assembly. The State Board of Education is authorized to make loans from the interest earned on the fund to districts which demonstrate critical capital needs.

***Creation of School District Capital Improvement Zones.*** The legislation authorizes the creation of capital improvement zones within the boundaries of existing school districts in order to contract bonded indebtedness for certain purposes. The criteria for creating these zones include: 1) the rejection of contracting bonded indebtedness at the preceding school bond election; 2) increasing enrollment in the district; 3) a limitation on the assessed valuation of the property in the proposed capital improvement zone to not less than one-sixth nor more than one-half of the valuation of all property within the district; and 4) a minimum number of pupils enrolled in the school district and residing within the proposed capital improvement zone.

*Sale of State School Lands.* The proposed legislation repeals the current pupil funding component for the district capital reserve fund. The legislation authorizes a school district to levy an additional property tax for the district's capital reserve fund to collect a maximum of \$202 per pupil, with the levy limited to two mills. For school districts which collect less than \$202 per pupil, the legislation requires the state to equalize the amount deposited in the capital reserve fund for each school district at the amount of \$202 per pupil. The state's share of equalization of district capital reserve funds would be appropriated from the interest earned on the proceeds from the sale of state school lands. The legislation requires that no less than 50 percent of the interest earned on the proceeds from the sale of school lands be credited to the public school fund for use in covering the state's share of capital reserve fund support.

*Additional Recommendations.* The task force recommended that state involvement in determining the goals and objectives of school district capital construction should be limited to current provisions for the health and safety of children and existing state and federal mandates for building characteristics. The task force suggested that local boards of education should establish any appropriate additional goals and objectives for capital construction needs within their districts.

The task force also recommended that the life-cycle costs of school building designs be further studied and evaluated.